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THE ZOOLOGIST:

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OF

NATURAL HISTORY,

FOR

RECORDING FACTS AND ANECDOTES

RELATING TO

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A List of the Birds of Cornwall. By EDWARD HEARLE RODD, Esq.

(Continued from Zool. S. S. 2244).

Wood Sandpiper.—Not uncommon in the autumn, and sometimes in the spring months: seven specimens obtained in one day, in the month of August, 1840, from the Land's End marshes, all of which proved to be birds of the year: smaller than the last-named species, with the legs longer.

[At p. 352 of his 'Spring and Summer in Lapland,' Mr. Wheelwright says of this bird, "Far different are the quiet unobtrusive habits of this little bird during the breeding-season, to the boisterous noisy behaviour of its congener, the green sandpiper. Early in the summer the wood sandpiper has a new pretty little song, which it trills out when seated on a tussock of grass or when risin gin the air in the vicinity of the nest. I have much oftener seen this bird seated on a tree or a rail than the green sandpiper, although that bird will occasionally perch."]

[Mr. Harting, at page 178 of his 'Birds of Middlesex,' seems to me to be the first author clearly to distinguish between the wood sandpiper and the green sandpiper, for which it may readily be mistaken. "It is rather smaller, has proportionately a shorter beak and longer tarsus, the legs are lighter in colour, and it has not the white markings under the wings which are so conspicuous in the green sandpiper: a marked difference also exists in the tail-feathers; in the green sandpiper the tail is for the greater part white; the outside feathers on each side with one small dark spot on the outer web near the end; the next feather with two dark spots; the third and fourth with two rather broad dark bands; the fifth and sixth with three or four dark bands; but all the marks are on the distal half of the tail-feathers, leaving the basal half pure white. In the wood sandpiper the tail-feathers are barred with narrow transverse white bars on a ground colour of greenish black. The axillary plume in the green sandpiper is grayish black, with narrow angular white bars; in the wood sandpiper it is white, faintly marked with transverse dusky bars. There is another point in which these birds differ and which appears to have been hitherto overlooked: in the wood sandpiper the shaft of the first quill-feather is white, the remaining shafts dusky, whereas in the green sandpiper the shafts of all the quill-feathers are dusky."]

Common Sandpiper.—Summer visitant: seen generally in pairs on the margins of fresh-water ponds. Trengwainton, Madron; Trevethow, Lelant; &c.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Greenshank.—Not uncommonly met with in the same localities as the redshank. This bird shows the connecting link between the sandpiper and the godwits, in the form of the beak, which turns a little upwards.

Avocet.—Very rare as a Cornish bird: one obtained from the Land's End, apparently a bird of the year, in September, 1847.

Blacktailed Godwit.—Uncommon: seen at Trengwainton ponds, and killed at the Land's End.

(I have received a specimen of this godwit from Scilly to-day. There is nothing at all remarkable in its plumage for brightness of colour on the throat, breast and belly, like its common congener the bartailed godwit, which I have always observed carries a fine unsullied bay-colour on its under parts at this season of the year; but in the blacktailed godwit there is nothing beyond a dull dirty reddish brown, which is confined to the breast only.—*April* 30, 1870.)

[Mr. Dresser has just mentioned to me a distinctive character between our two godwits, pointed out to him by Mr. Blyth: the blacktailed has the claw of the middle toe serrated, the bartailed plain.—*Edward Newman.*]

Bartailed Godwit.—Generally to be met with in the autumnal months on flat sands and estuaries, and along the shores of our harbours and creeks, but the species affects some localities, whilst others equally favourable are deserted. In summer the breast of this species is bright bay, in winter white; the breast of the bird of the year, until the next summer, buff-coloured. (See note on the "Knot.")

Ruff.—Occasionally met with in the autumnal months, in the marshes in the Land's End district.

Woodcock.—Winter visitor: universally distributed in suitable localities. Their first appearance takes place about the second week in October, and the first flights usually take place with the wind at any point to the east from the south: the birds are usually first found in the open heathery ground at and adjacent to hills.

[The Rev. W. T. Bree, at p. 147 of the third volume of 'Loudon's Magazine of Natural History,' points out a distinguishing mark between the sexes of the woodcock: he says, "the front or outer edge of the first quill-feather of the cock bird is marked alternately with dark and light spots of a somewhat triangular shape, while in the hen the corresponding feather is without spots, and in lieu of them presents a uniform light-coloured stripe extending the whole length of the feather." This distinction is not generally known, or rather is not generally admitted. Mr. Harting quotes the paragraph without comment. I shall be very glad to learn the opinion of ornithologists on this subject.]

Great Snipe.—Very rare generally in the western counties. A specimen from the parish of Towednack, and another from St. Levan; another shot at Crowdymarsh, near Camelford. Met with more frequently in Norfolk and the eastern counties. Number of tail-feathers, sixteen.

Common Snipe.—Universally distributed in suitable localities: a brown variety, with the dorsal stripes narrower, occasionally met with. Nest and eggs found at Tremethick marsh, Madron. Number of tail-feathers, fourteen.

Jack Snipe.—As universally distributed as the last-named species: no instance recorded of its remaining throughout the summer. Number of tail-feathers, twelve.

[This is the *becassin sourde* or *deaf snipe* of Temminck; whence comes this name? from its lying so close? A number of instances have been recorded of the jack snipe breeding in this country, one of which, from my expressing disbelief, involved me in a literary controversy in the 'Field,' in which, as regards argument, I got sadly worsted, I cannot say convinced; if I recollect right this controverted nest contained eleven eggs! Temminck tells us it breeds commonly about St. Petersburgh, but assigns it, as I should have expected, only four eggs.—*E. Newman.*]

Sabine's Snipe.—This *variety* of the common snipe, as it is now supposed to be, was killed near Carnanton, in the neighbourhood of St. Columb, in January, 1862, in a very fine state of plumage:—it, in every respect as to colour, dimensions, and arrangement of markings, answers the description of authors of this bird: there is an entire absence of the longitudinal stripes in the back, with the uniform brown freckled plumage from the chin to the vent: the facial mask, from the corner of the mouth to the eyes and so all round under the throat, is dull black; a black stripe half an inch wide runs from the top of the head to the nape of the neck, with a few rusty brown spots sparingly distributed; the under-surface of the quill—secondary and tertial feathers—blackish gray, as are also the lateral under scapularies; the whole upper plumage marbled with deep black and rust, uniform throughout—the tail with alternate black and rusty bars. Number of tail-feathers,' in this specimen, *fourteen*—corresponding in this character with S. gallinago. Mr. Gould, when on a visit to me, examined the specimen and tested the above description; his opinion is that its specific distinction from the common snipe cannot be supported.

Brown Snipe.—Very rare as a British bird, five or six examples only having occurred: one reputed to have been killed in Devon. Very common on the shores of America. The first and only example of this rare species in Cornwall (a bird of the year) occurred at Scilly on the 3rd of October, 1857: it was observed by A. Pechell, Esq., by the fresh-water pond, Higher moors, St. Mary's; he had no opportunity of hearing its note: it was standing a little in the water, and probing with its bill like the godwit.

Curlew Sandpiper.—Common in the autumnal months along our flat beaches, associated with dunlins, ring plovers, &c.; breast in summer bright red, in winter white; sometimes killed in the intermediate state; distinguished from the dunlin, in winter plumage, by the upper tail-coverts being always white.

Knot.—A few observed on most of our flat beaches in the autumnal season, generally birds of the year: in summer plumage the breast is bright red, in winter white, and the feathers on the back with a greater mixture of black: specimens obtained in winter, summer, and in the intermediate states of plumage. Marazion sands. Birds which in winter have the breast white, and in summer the same part red, exhibit an intermediate or buff-colour on this part when in their first or immature plumage of the year.

Buffbreasted Sandpiper.—Very rare: two examples only recorded of its capture in Cornwall; one occurred in the month of September, 1846, when it was seen and shot on the flat sands between Penzance and Marazion; the other specimen, in a similar state of plumage, was killed in the latter part of September, 1860, at the pool near Chûn Castle, Morvah (See 'Zoologist,' 1860), by W. H. Vingoe.

Little Stint.—Occasionally seen, and specimens obtained from salt marshes near the sea. Marazion marsh and Hayle estuary.

Temminck's Stint.—Found occasionally in the same localities as the last-named species, but not so frequently. The tarsus of this bird is considerably shorter than in T. minuta, which is its principal characteristic distinction.

[The most essential difference between these two species may perhaps be best shown as follows:—*Temminck's Stint.* Colour, more uniform. Tarsus, light brown, short and slender. Wings, first quill-feathers with white shaft, all the other quill-feathers with dusky shafts. Tertial feathers reach to very near the end of the primaries. Tail, three outer feathers on each side almost white; the first outside white with a faint dusky spot on the outer web; the second white, with a narrow dusky streak on outer web. *Little Stint.* Colour, more varied. Tarsus, black, longer and stouter. Wings, all the quill-feathers with white shafts. Tertial feathers do not reach within a quarter of an inch of end of primaries. Tail, three outer feathers on each side all pale gray; no white."—*Harting*, p. 199. The difference in the colour of the shafts of the quill-feathers was first pointed out by Mr. Wheelwright.]

[At p. 349 of his 'Spring and Summer in Lapland,' Mr. Wheelwright describes the nest and eggs of Temminck's stint:—"The nest was placed on a tussock of rushy grass in a swampy part of the meadow and consisted of nothing more than a few bits of dry grass. The eggs were four in number and very pyriform; their colour chocolate-brown, covered with a deeper shade of small fine spots all over."]

American Stint.—An example killed in Marazion marsh, October 10th, 1854. This is the first recorded British specimen (See Zool. 1854). This rare example was killed by Mr. W. H. Vingoe.

[Mr. Rodd has asked me to communicate some particulars with reference to the American stint referred to by him in the 'Zoologist' for December (S. S. 1920), which was shot by me on the 22nd of September last, and I have much pleasure in complying with his request. I observed the bird on several successive mornings before I obtained it on a salt-marsh lying between Northam Burrows and the estuary of the rivers Taw and Torridge, and on every occasion it was alone. It seemed very active and restless, and was rather difficult of approach. When it rose it always repeated a short hurried note, similar to that of the two other species, though perhaps rather shriller and more frequently reiterated (differing in this particular from Mr. Vingoe's specimen, which was silent when it rose). Its flight was strong and rapid for so small a bird, and struck me as being something like that of the common sandpiper, which bird indeed (except with regard to the vibratory motion of the body peculiar to that species) it somewhat resembled in its movements when on the ground. It always flew away across the water out of sight and at a great height, but it invariably returned to the same spot where I had first observed it. I had no difficulty in identifying the bird as distinct from either of the two British species of stint, and a careful comparison of it with the description of Mr. Vingoe's specimen of the American stint in

Newman's edition of Montagu's Dictionary, led me to think that it would prove to be a second British specimen of that species—a supposition the accuracy of which was kindly tested and established by Mr. Rodd and Mr. Vingoe, to whom I sent it for inspection. The specimen is now in my possession. It is a male bird, and as far as I can judge, in full plumage, which is of a very much darker shade throughout than that of Tringa minuta. The measurements and description generally correspond pretty nearly with those of Mr. Vingoe's specimen, as given in Newman's Dictionary, though the differences between the species in question and the two British species appear perhaps to be a little more pronounced in my specimen than in his. One point alone of actual dissimilarity may be noticed, and this may be very likely owing to a diversity of age or sex. In his specimen the legs were grayish yellow; in mine they are greenish gray, strongly inclining to the former tint. I think the occurrence of the bird may most probably be attributed to the prevalence of south-westerly gales, of which we had had a succession for many days previously.—*Marcus S. C. Rickards; Clifton, December* 10, 1869.]

[Two distinct species go by the name of American stint, *Tringa Wilsonii* and *Ereunetes petrificatus*, will Mr. Rickards kindly say to which of these his specimen belongs.—*Edward Newman.*]

Schinz's Sandpiper.—Two specimens killed on Hayle estuary, in October, 1846, by Mr. Vingoe. This is an extremely rare British bird, and Mr. Yarrell refers to one only having been killed, and that in Shropshire. It is very nearly allied to the dunlin, but its white rump and shorter bill, and also the absence of the black patch on the breast in summer, are distinguishing characters. (See 'Zoologist,' 1846, p. 1554).

Pectoral Sandpiper.—Scilly. I quote the words of Mr. Yarrell in reference to the capture of this interesting species in Cornwall:—"Mr. D. W. Mitchell, of Penzance, sent me in June, 1840, a coloured drawing of the natural size, and a fully detailed description with measurements, of a sandpiper, shot by himself on the 27th of the previous month, while the bird was resting on some sea-weed within a few yards of the water on the rocky shore of Annet, one of the uninhabited islands of Scilly. On the following day another example was seen, but became so wild after an unsuccessful shot that it took off to another island and escaped altogether. The close accordance of the specimen obtained with the description of Tringa pectoralis in summer plumage in the fourth part of M. Temminck's 'Manual,' led Mr.

Mitchell to a true conclusion as to the species and its novelty and interest in this country."

Dunlin.—Generally distributed on all our flat beaches throughout the year, but more especially in the winter months: observed occasionally in the summer, on Bodmin moor, near Trewortha marsh. Distinguished from the curlew tringa by the brown and rufous feathers extending all the way over the back and upper coverts of the tail, which in the other species are white.

Purple Sandpiper.—Not unfrequently seen on the rocks extending into the sea, both in the spring and winter. Battery rocks, Wherry rocks, and Long rock, Mount's Bay. The figure in Bewick's work on 'British Birds,' under the word "Knot" is referable to this species in winter plumage.

Land Rail.—Locally distributed over the east and west of Cornwall; common in the spring and summer in the grass-land about Penzance: nest and eggs frequently found.

Spotted Crake.—Occasional winter visitant, and sometimes in considerable numbers: specimens have been obtained from this neighbourhood, but its occurrence is rare.

Little Crake.—This is a rare British bird, and although no recorded Cornish example exists, Mr. Drew, naturalist, late of Plymouth, had a specimen which he said he received from the neighbourhood. The next species has been captured in Cornwall, and it is probable that the present species also exists.

Baillon's Crake.—A rare British species: one specimen obtained from the basin of Penzance pier, and another from Zennor.

Moorhen.—The remarks on the water rail apply also to this species.

Water Rail.—Generally met with in suitable localities, *viz.*, sedgy morasses, overgrown wet ditches, &c.

Coot.—Not unfrequently met with in some localities, but not so numerous as the two last-named.

Gray Phalarope.—Occasional visitant, and often in large numbers, in the autumnal and winter months, but at uncertain intervals.

Rednecked Phalarope.—Found principally in the Northern Islands. Helford; Scilly.

NATATORES.

Graylag Goose.—A specimen was shot in Marazion marsh in the early part of March, 1862: this is the first Cornish example that has come under my notice: it has a slight border of white at the base of the bill, but it cannot be confounded with A. albifrons. The appearance of this, as well as many other northern birds, in southern latitudes, depends so much upon the severity of our winters, that their occurrence at suitable periods ought not to be looked upon as improbable.

Bean Goose.—This is our common wild goose observed in severe winters in large flocks: unless there is a strong frost, and of some continuance, in the north, they are seldom seen in the southern and western counties.

Whitefronted Goose.—Not unfrequently obtained at the Land's End in the winter months.

Bernicle Goose.—Sometimes obtained from the Land's End marshes, and it has been observed in Mount's Bay.

Brent Goose.—Occasional visitant, and in considerable flocks in hard winters: during severe frost they appear to be oceanic in their habits, frequenting Mount's Bay at a distance of from half-a-mile to a mile from the land.

Spurwinged Goose.—The only recorded British specimen was killed near St. Germans, in June, 1821, and, in a mutilated state, was given by Mr. Henry Mewburn, of that place, to the late Mr. Bewick, whose figure, in his 'British Birds,' was taken from this individual,—a most valuable acquisition to the Cornish Fauna.

Hooper or Wild Swan.—The hooper is generally observed in the western counties after a long continuance of hard frost, and the bird is then observed in some numbers in harbours, &c.

Bewick's Swan.—This species was so long confounded with the former, as a small variety, that I have ventured to record it as Cornish: the distinctive characters of the two birds are beautifully illustrated in a series of anatomical engravings by Mr. Yarrell, in his third vol. of 'British Birds.'

Mute Swan.—Only known as domesticated.

[This bird being identified with Orpheus, and called also the bird of Apollo, the god of music, powers of song have often been attributed to it and as often denied: it is, however, perfectly true that it has a soft low voice, rather plaintive, and with little variety, but not disagreeable. I have heard it often in the spring, and sometimes later in the season, when moving slowly about with its young. Col. Hawker, in his 'Instructions to young Sportsmen,' says, "The only note which I ever heard the wild swan utter in winter is his well-known hoop, but one summer evening I was amused with watching and listening to a domesticated one as he swam up and down the water in the Regent's Park. He tuned up a sort of melody made of two notes, C and the minor E flat, and kept working his head, as if delighted with his own performance." Professor Auguste Bertini has taken down the melody, and Mr. Harting has republished it at p. 222 of his 'Birds of Middlesex.']

Common Shieldrake.—Not uncommon in severe winters; specimens on several occasions obtained from the ponds at Sennen.

Shoveler.—Not uncommon in severe winters at the Sennen ponds.

Wild Duck.—Universally distributed in suitable localities, especially in hard winters, when immense numbers resort to the pools and marshes near the Land's End, being the most extreme point of refuge westward, in pursuing a course to avoid the rigours of intense cold.

Gadwall.—Rare: one specimen, and the only one recorded from this neighbourhood, killed on Trengwainton ponds.

Pintail Duck.—Common in the Land's End district in severe weather.

Garganey.—A rare visitor in Cornwall; a few summers since several were obtained in the neighbourhood of Penzance in very beautiful plumage, and preserved.

(The garganeys visit us sometimes, but rarely, in the early spring, on their journey to the eastern counties, where they breed. Three specimens, in adult and beautiful plumage, were obtained on the 30th of March, and sent for preservation by Mr. J. Symons, jun., from the Land's End.—*April* 9, 1870.)

Teal.—The most regular of our duck visitors every winter, appearing sometimes early in the autumn, and at times in large numbers in the marsh pools at the Land's End.

Wigeon.—A regular visitor to the Land's End district every winter, but not so generally distributed as the last-named species.

Eider Duck.—One specimen killed on the river Looe: rarely seen in southern latitudes.

Velvet Scoter.—Sometimes seen in Mount's Bay, and one shot at Penzance quay.

Scoter.—Rare: occasionally seen in Mount's Bay and captured. All the scoters are oceanic in their habits, and are more frequently seen at sea than inland.

Surf Scoter.—A rare bird in England, and only occasionally seen in the north of Scotland. A specimen of this duck in adult plumage was picked up in a dying state on the beach at St. Mary's, Scilly, on the 22nd of September: the autumnal moult was completed and the plumage yet black; the white on the top and back of the head pure white; the colour of the anterior portion of the bill Seville-orange-yellow; nail, grayish yellow; legs, tile-red; membranes, black. A specimen in a mutilated state said to have been found near Pendennis castle in 1852.

Pochard.—Not uncommon in the winter months after frost in the Land's End district.

Scaup Duck.—Rare in the western districts, a few occurring in severe weather: the female has a broad white patch at the base of the bill.

Tufted Duck.—Found in the Land's End district in all winters with more or less frost.

Longtailed Duck.—Very rarely found in the southern counties of England: a female killed on Marazion marsh a few years since, and now preserved in a private museum; also a specimen from Tregothnan.

Goldeneye.—Not an uncommon species in hard winters in the Land's End district.

(It may be observed that the goldeneyes that appear in the far west after and during severe weather are in the proportion of forty out of fifty in the female plumage, or perhaps in the female plumage of the first year of each sex. I observed one this week in perfectly adult plumage.—*February* 9, 1870).

Smew.—Rare: a few instances of its occurrence on record. A specimen obtained from the ponds at Pendarves, and one, either a female or male in immature plumage, from the neighbourhood of Penzance.

Redbreasted Merganser.—Generally a winter visitor, and during severe weather not a very uncommon bird.

(I saw a full-plumaged merganser which was killed in the middle of the late winter in this neighbourhood: all the specimens I have hitherto seen here—and they have occurred in the winter months—have been in the sombre garb of the dun diver figures. I have regarded this state of plumage as seasonal, as well as indicative of birds of the year; but the adult ornamental plumage of the specimen under notice induces me to suggest that if generally the less ornamental livery is the winter dress, very old birds may retain the full plumage perennially.—*April* 9, 1870.)

Goosander.—Sometimes observed in Mount's Bay, but only in winter plumage: the adult male has the breast of a beautiful glowing maroon buff-colour. Perran-uthnoe.

Great Crested Grebe.—Not uncommon in winter on marshes in the Land's End district: it is rarely met with in the southern and western counties in its tufted plumage.

Rednecked Grebe.—Quite as often occurring as the last-named species, frequenting the same localities; sometimes killed towards the spring, when some of the red feathers on the neck appear, characteristic of its nuptial livery. Base of the bill in this species yellow.

Sclavonian Grebe.—Specimens not in adult plumage occasionally obtained from the Land's End district, but less numerous than the two last-named species.

(Several specimens of the horned grebe (*Podiceps cornutus*) came to hand during the late hard winter, from different localities in West Cornwall. All the specimens that I saw were without elongated feathers or fringes, and were, I presume, either in the first year or in winter plumage. —*April* 9, 1870.)

Eared Grebe.—Specimens not unfrequently obtained from the neighbourhood of Penzance, but generally in immature plumage: a specimen in adult summer plumage obtained some years since from St. Just pool, Falmouth harbour, and now in the Truro Museum; another from Helford river, now in my collection.

Little Grebe.—The most commonly distributed of all the grebes in the Land's End district. In summer plumage the neck is dark red, with the chin black, and as such it has been described as a distinct species, under the name of the "black-chinned grebe:" in this state it has been obtained from Trengwainton ponds, Madron; it is usually known by the name of "dabchick."

Great Northern Diver.—Found more or less abundantly every year in Mount's Bay, generally in immature plumage, and in the autumnal months; though of late years some specimens in the adult state have been killed. It is now supposed that the full-spotted plumage of this bird, and of the other two species, is not only indicative of maturity, but also of the adult summer state, which gives way at the autumnal moult to the "Imber" plumage. It is a question whether in very old birds the full-speckled plumage is not retained perennially: occasionally specimens are seen on the Cornish coast in the winter months in the full plumage of summer, and it has been attributed to accident or disease, but I rather think that this will generally prove to be the exception with very old birds. See articles in the 'Zoologist' on the plumage of this bird.

Blackthroated Diver.—More rare than the former species, but sometimes seen in Mount's Bay.

Redthroated Diver.—Common in the autumnal and winter months in Mount's Bay, and at this season invariably found without the red throat, and in the plumage represented by Bewick as the "speckled diver," which is supposed to be this bird after the autumnal moult.

Common Guillemot.—Frequently seen singly, and in small parties, in Mount's Bay, and around our coast. This bird, which is about the size of a bantam fowl, lays its single egg, which is quite as large as that of a turkey, and scarcely two are found alike,—some being green, white, and of the intermediate tints,—some immaculate, and others more or less spotted.

Ringed Guillemot.—The specific distinction of this bird from the common guillemot is doubted.

Black Guillemot.—Rare on the western coasts of Cornwall: one example, in intermediate plumage, taken some years since in Mount's Bay.

Little Auk.—Not unfrequently met with in Mount's Bay in some seasons: other instances of its capture in the county are recorded, although regarded as a rare bird.

Puffin.—Occasionally observed on the Land's End cliffs, but the precipitous rocks on some of the islands at Scilly appear to be its favourite haunts, where it annually breeds; egg dirty white.

Razorbill.— A common species, sometimes appearing in small parties in Mount's Bay, and all round our coast, especially at Scilly.

Cormorant.—Generally distributed throughout the western coast of Cornwall, sometimes observed inland. Number of tail-feathers, fourteen; this, together with a white patch over the thigh, and on the throat, distinguishes it in summer from the common shag.

Shag.—More numerous as a species than the last-named, and more frequently observed in creeks and arms of the sea. Number of tail-feathers, twelve. A reverted occipital crest distinguishes it in summer plumage.

Gannet.—Not unfrequently observed, and sometimes in small companies, in Mount's Bay and on the north coast. The young of the year is remarkable for a plumage wholly unlike that of the adult bird, being smoke-gray, studded all over with minute white specks. Not known to breed on the Cornish coast, or at Scilly.

EDWARD HEARLE RODD.

(To be continued.)

Natural History of Wicklow and Kerry.

By A. B. BROOKE, Esq.

THE following are a few rough notes on the natural history of Wicklow and Kerry, taken this year during the months of March, April and May, and may be interesting to some of your readers. I am very sorry my time at Dingle, in Kerry, was so limited, otherwise I would have tried to give a fuller list of the sea birds breeding in that interesting locality, but I hope to be able to do so at some future time.

Otters.—Are still common in these counties. Frequently coming on their tracks about Lough Broad, a large brackish lake on the east coast of Wicklow, separated from the sea by a low shingly beach; and being anxious to secure one or two specimens for my collection, I examined its shores very carefully. On the top of a grassy bank in a lonely corner of the lake, surrounded by deep, wide dykes, full of trout and eels, I came upon a place that was evidently the favourite haunt of an otter. Three broad well-beaten runs led to his bed in the middle of the bank, upon which spot he used to lie coiled up in the sun all day long, and from which he could, on the slightest approach of danger, glide into one of the surrounding dykes, the banks of which, being all grown over with long rushy grass and brambles, formed a secure retreat: this he had without doubt just done, the grass being pressed down and the bed dry and warm. Setting a strong steel trap carefully where the runs met, I attached it to a cord long enough to allow him to get into the water, which, if possible, is the first thing an otter does when he finds himself caught. Early the next morning on visiting the trap, I saw under the bank a long black line, and on getting closer made out the wild, wicked-looking face of an immense otter. The moment our eyes met, he dived without a sound. I then saw he was caught by the hind leg, and being afraid he might not be securely held, and seeing his great size and strength, I was very careful, and was obliged to play him like a fish for more than ten minutes before I could get him on the bank. He turned out a magnificent dog otter, and his dimensions, most carefully taken, were as follows:—

Length of head and body	30½	inches.
„ tail	19½	„
Girth of neck	15½	„
„ behind fore-legs	18	„

Weight 22 lbs.

I am inclined to think that the weights and measurements of otters are frequently much exaggerated. Both my brother and I have for many years been greatly interested in these animals, and numerous specimens have passed through our hands: none of these equalled the size of this otter; the largest that came under the notice of the late Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, during his long observations on the Zoology of Ireland, being also inferior to him in dimensions. A female weighing 16¼ lbs. was caught a few days afterwards: she had two young ones inside her, male and female, about the size of mice. This was on the 13th of May; two other old females caught the same month had no sign of young in them.

Badgers.—Still hold their ground, and are found sparingly through both these counties.

Marten Cat.—Though nearly extinct in the north of Ireland, still common in some of the southern counties, especially in Kerry. A female caught by myself on the 31st of March, in Wicklow, weighed 2 lbs. 12 oz., and measured twenty-eight inches from nose to tip of tail; she had three young ones inside her, the period of gestation being about half completed. As far as I am aware there is only the one instance mentioned by Thompson, vol. iv. page 9, of the Mustela foina being found in Ireland, the yellow-breasted variety (*M. Abietum*) being almost invariably found. Mr. Glennon, of Wicklow Street, Dublin, tells me that out of thirteen martens received by him this year, not one had the white breast.

Gray Seal (Halichærus gryphus).—The north side of Dingle Bay, and the Blasket Islands, off the coast of Kerry, are great haunts of this species, which seems in that locality entirely to take the place of Phoca vitulina, of which latter species I did not detect a single specimen during my stay at Dingle. When the weather is at all rough, Ventry Bay, from its being beautifully sheltered and at the same time a good fishing-ground, is much resorted to by these animals. On a calm evening I have seen as many as four and five in the bay at one time. The first evening I went out I was fortunate enough to shoot a very fine old male: he was killed instantaneously, and sank on the spot, but was washed up by the tide that night and brought to me the following day, much to my satisfaction. He weighed 322 lbs., and measured seven feet ten inches from the point of his nose to the end of his flippers, four feet seven inches being his greatest girth. His coat was of a shining and intense black, with the exception of a few gray spots on his shoulders, and the back of his head, which was a grizzly gray. I saw many afterwards, but was unable to secure another specimen: none of these varied from the usual yellowish gray colour of this species.

Golden Eagle.—Used to breed regularly on Brandon, in Kerry, but now very scarce. I saw, however, a young female which was caught in a rabbit trap, baited for a fox, last winter, by Lord Ventry's gamekeeper.

Sea Eagle.—A pair breed regularly every year on one of the Blasket Islands.

Peregrine Falcon.—A pair of these noble birds are, I am happy to say, found breeding in all suitable localities round the coast of Kerry, owing, no doubt, greatly to the interest Lord Ventry takes in our native birds, prohibiting their destruction on his property.

Goshawk.—In Ballymanas Wood, in Wicklow, I saw a young male: he flew up the wood towards me, alighting on a bare branch of an oak tree about thirty yards off. The longitudinal markings and rufous edgings to his feathers characteristic of immaturity were strongly defined. The only authenticated instance of the occurrence of this species in Ireland during this century, that I am aware of, was recorded by my brother in 'Land and Water,' March 5th, 1870. She was a splendid old female, weighing three pounds seven ounces, and was shot during last winter on the Galtee mountains, Tipperary. It is a remarkable fact that in old hawking days Irish goshawks were famous, and are to be found mentioned in some of the oldest works upon falconry; for example, at page 5 in 'Libro de cetreria,' by Don Fadrique de Cuniga, y Lotoma, published in Salamanca in 1565, and also in the 'Book of Falconry or Hawking,' by George Turkerville, published in London, 1611, page 60. Both of these works were the greatest authorities of their time, and the Irish goshawks are mentioned as being most highly prized.

Hen Harrier.—Common in parts of Kerry, having, if anything, increased of late years.

Marsh Harrier.—Saw a pair hunting over Lough Broad, in Wicklow. Very probably were breeding there, as I saw them repeatedly.

Raven.—Used to be very common, but have all been poisoned lately on account of the damage they did, destroying young lambs, &c. I only saw one bird on the Blasket Islands.

Hooded Crow.—Extremely common.

Chough.—Found in pairs round the coast of Kerry.

Chiffchaff.—First heard in Wicklow, April 2nd.

Swallow.—First seen in Wicklow, April 9th.

Sand Martin.—First seen in Wicklow, April 10th.

Willow Wren.—First heard in Wicklow, April 11th.

Sedge Warbler.—First heard in Wicklow, April 24th.

Common Swift.—First seen in Wicklow, April 29th.

Corncrake.—First heard at Killarney, May 1st.

Bean Goose.—A flock of about fifty of these birds winter every year on Lough Broad. They allow the train to pass within seventy yards of them without even looking up. I did not see them after the 9th of April.

Shoveler.—Saw a pair, male and female, on the lower lake at Killarney on the 21st of May.

Garganey Teal.—To my great delight I detected a pair of these rare visitors to Ireland on Lough Broad, County Wicklow. I watched them closely for three days before I succeeded in getting the drake, but very stupidly missed the duck. They were in company with a small flock of common teal, but never seemed to be thoroughly at home with them, always keeping a little apart, and when put up separated at once.. Their note was a low croak. The drake was a beautiful bird in full adult plumage: he weighed 1 lb. 3 oz. Length fifteen inches and a half.

Tufted Duck.—Shot a drake at Killarney on the 4th of May: he had been wounded in one wing during the winter, which would account for his late appearance. Weight 1 lb. 10 oz.

Heron.—A few breed in the cliffs, in company with shags and herring gulls, in one or two places to the west of Dingle. The young birds were fully fledged, and standing up on their nests on the 3rd of June.

Great Northern Diver.—I shot a pair of these magnificent birds in full adult plumage, on the 5th of May, on the lower lake at Killarney. Although it is well known that these birds sometimes remain very late in this country, before leaving for breeding, it is remarkable this pair being on *fresh* water at this time of the year. Mr. Ward, of Wigmore Street, by whom they were examined, informs me that the eggs in the female were much developed. They weighed respectively twelve pounds and a half and ten pounds and a half. I afterwards saw three more in Ventry Bay on the 11th of June.

Cormorant.—Very common round the coast.

Shag.—As common as the above species. They breed in colonies, high up in the cliffs. The young were hatched, and some of them nearly as large as the old birds on the 3rd of June.

Gannet.—Breeds on the Skellig rocks, south of Dingle Bay.

Common Guillemot.—Breeds on Teraght Island, the most westerly of the Blaskets, a precipitous barren-looking rock, rising seven hundred or eight hundred feet out of the sea. Weight of a female 2℔s.

Ringed Guillemot.—I saw three of this species sitting on the cliffs of Teraght, among the common guillemots.

Black Guillemot.—Saw an odd pair round the coast, but did not discover their breeding-place.

Razorbill.—Breeds in countless numbers on Teraght. Weight of a female 1 ℔. 4½ oz.: stomach full of small sand-eels.

Puffin.—If anything more numerous than the razorbills.

Arctic Tern.—Common, breeding on some of the smaller rocks in Blasket Sound.

Glaucous Gull.—A fine adult specimen was shot about twelve years ago, in a corn-field near Tralee Bay.

Iceland Gull.—A specimen of this rare gull was shot by Captain De Moleyns, at Ventry Bay, in the winter of 1868; another was seen at the same time, but he was unable to secure it. The specimen killed, an immature bird, was most kindly given to me.

Herring Gull.—Very common, breeding in suitable localities all round the north coast of Dingle Bay.

Kittiwake.—Breeds in great numbers on Teraght.

Greater and Lesser Blackbacked Gulls.—Both breed on some of the Blasket Islands.

Storm Petrel.—Breeds in numbers on Innismickillan, the south Blasket. I caught eight specimens on their nests, but only secured two eggs, as I was rather too early in the season.

A. B. BROOKE.

Colebrook Park, Brookeboro', Fermanagh, Ireland.
August 3, 1870.

Ornithological Notes from North Lincolnshire.

By JOHN CORDEAUX, Esq.

(Continued from S. S. 2081.)

JUNE AND JULY, 1870.

Nightingale.—June 2. At ten o'clock this evening, when walking home through the Bradley Woods, about three miles from this place, I heard the nightingale singing. Although this exquisite songstress occasionally visits the north-western corner of the county, this is the first occasion I have had the pleasure of hearing it in this neighbourhood. The dry and hot spring may have induced them to extend their range into the bleak north-east corner of Lincolnshire. I am informed on good authority that nightingales have also nightly been heard during the present spring in the Irby-dales woods, also in this district.

Ruff and Reeves.—June 10. Almost daily lately, when crossing the marshes, I have seen a flock of eight birds fly rapidly past, and although I felt convinced they were a party of reeves, could never get near enough to be certain as to their identity; clearly they were neither golden plover nor dotterel; one was larger and darker than the others, and not unlike, when on the wing, a golden plover in summer dress. To-day I found them feeding in our largest marsh pasture, and by riding quietly round the flock, beginning at some distance and gradually contracting the circle, I got near enough to find they were what I suspected, a ruff and seven reeves, the former in the beautiful nuptial attire. In the afternoon I had the pleasure of again watching them, but this time through my telescope. Compared with either golden plover or dotterel, they are restless unquiet feeders, and are frequently shifting their ground, taking little flights of twenty or thirty yards. Considering the length of the tarsi they are by no means high standing birds, and look less elevated even than the golden plover. The body is carried horizontally, the tibio-tarsal joints being much bent; the head, if anything, inclined downwards. They run rapidly, now and then stopping to pick up some small substance, probably an insect, from the grass, and are often crossing and recrossing each other's tracks, not feeding, like the knót, all in the same direction. The ruff appears both proud and jealous of his seven wives, following them up closely; and occasionally, when he thinks they are getting too far away, he takes a short flight towards them. He is most watchful, and ever on the alert, on the slightest appearance of danger invariably takes the initiative, stretching himself to the full extent, and is then a conspicuous and beautiful object, looking nearly twice his natural size. If the alarm is well grounded, he at once rises, his reeves rising with him, and they go off together at a great pace, silently and in close order, skimming the ground, and sometimes will simultaneously shoot upwards to a higher elevation, and as rapidly, when about to alight, descend. This ruff was a dark-plumaged variety, showing a considerable amount of deep chestnut and purple. I did not see them any more after this day: they were, however, seen, I understand, in our marshes up to the middle of June.

Wild Duck.—Several have bred in the marsh this season; two broods on my own farm were flyers early in June. In the adjoining marshes a pair nested on the top of a bean-stack, and in 1869 (probably the same birds) on a straw stack.

Brownheaded Gull.—July 1st. We have now some large gatherings of these gulls in the Humber marshes, and with more young immature birds than is usual. The increase of this species in North Lincolnshire during the last ten years is due to the care taken not to disturb them unduly at their breeding haunts. This is the common gull of the river, except in the winter season, when their place is in a great measure occupied by the common and herring gulls. As far as I am aware the only objection hitherto raised to the well-timed and humane Sea-bird Preservation Act is grounded on the occasional depredations committed by gulls amongst the young of wild-fowl, game and rabbits. Granted that the larger species (for I cannot for a moment think that this can be laid to the charge of any of the smaller gulls, as the common, brownhead, and kittiwake) do now and then gobble up a young duck or grouse during the breeding-season, any loss to the community on this score is certainly of very little moment compared with the great advantages we derive from their kindly services in clearing our fields from many noxious and destructive slugs and grubs (and even rats and mice), before whose insidious attacks, we, alone, are powerless to contend. Scores of sportsmen, like myself, living on the coast, can testify that the sea-gull is not incompatible with an abundance of game, not even the most vermin-hating of gamekeepers ever dreaming of waging war against him. In how many instances, indeed, would a few game-eating gulls be the greatest possible boon to the farmer.

Snipe.—July 12. First arrivals.

Food of the Sparrow.—July 25. Sparrows feed their young during the spring and summer almost exclusively on insects and their larvæ. I find, however, that as soon as the sweet, milky grain of the wheat is obtainable it is preferred. The stomachs of thirty-five young sparrows taken to-day from nests about my house, give the following result—one part insects to two parts soft grain. The young were of all sizes, from a day old to others sufficiently fledged to fly short distances; some had the stomach filled almost entirely with insects, and others with grain alone; generally, however, there was an admixture in the above proportion. The grain was not confined to the oldest birds, as the stomachs of two baby-sparrows, from appearances hatched but a few hours, contained nothing but grain. One little bird had its gizzard filled with a large moth, which unfolded was half the size of its body. Where grain was present there was also a proportionate supply of small stones to assist digestion. Those gizzards containing the largest proportion of grain had invariably the most stones. The insect remains were principally those of various Coleoptera and many small caterpillars and grubs.

A Starling roost.—There is a famous roosting-place of the starling in a "spinney" near my house, where thousands resort nightly at this season. This place is also much frequented by flocks of rooks and jackdaws. From the injury done to the trees, attempts have been made in past years to get rid of these various lodgers, by discharging guns at sunset round the plantation, but with only partial success, as, although for a time the birds forsake the place, they invariably reoccupy it each succeeding year. The starling retires early to bed, companies coming in from every quarter by six o'clock, and at seven all the trees, excepting those on the outskirts, are more or less tenanted, but more thickly towards the centre of the plantation. The trees are spruce and larch, averaging eighteen to twenty feet in height, the lower branches trimmed off to six feet from the ground; the upper portion, however, is very thick and close, with the boughs much interlaced, forming a shady retreat, impervious alike to sun and rain. I have stood in the centre of this place on a summer's evening with hundreds of starlings roosting within a few feet of me, and, as long as I remained perfectly quiet, without disturbing them. Most of them are asleep—balls of dark feathers, looking like clusters of fruit as they sit, row above row, on the slender larch boughs, their collected weight often bending the branch to such a degree that it is marvellous how the outsiders manage to hang on, and yet they never seem to slip, or tumble off, but roost on with an utter disregard to position. Nine-tenths of the birds are sleeping, old and young mixed indiscriminately; now and then I see one, more restless or suspicious than his fellows, with neck outstretched peering downwards, as if not quite satisfied that all is well, but, seeing nothing to be alarmed at, he too settles himself on his perch, tucks his bill away, and soon, may-be, (for why should birds not dream?) his little wits are wandering in bird dreamland. The starlings occupy the central portion of these trees; above them sit the rooks and jackdaws. These now stand out wonderfully distinct, single or in dark groups against the clear opal sky, now flushed with the last faint glow of departing day. Some are sleeping, others sit all in a lump, their head half-buried between the shoulders. It is a scene of the most perfect rest and contentment. I feel very much like a burglar in the midst of a sleeping household as I bring my gun up, not to destroy, but to alarm; I can touch the unconscious starlings right and left with the muzzle. The effects of the discharge is perfectly astounding,—I can only compare the row to the bursting of some large reservoir; it is the roar and rush of a mighty torrent. The dust and smell are overpowering, as the birds in their fright dislodge the dried whitewash with which every branch and twig is coated, floating downwards in a dense cloud of white pungent powder, mixed with feathers, till I am nearly suffocated by the mingled heat and stench. The plantation becomes very much what I should imagine the hold of a guano-ship would be in a gale of wind. Ten minutes after the shot the hubbub has ceased, and the starlings once more settled on their roosts, the rooks and jackdaws returning a few minutes later. On a second shot the latter to a bird leave the cover and do not return again, retiring to a neighbouring wood. The starlings merely rise above the trees and settle again; no amount of firing would now dislodge them. As I leave the plantation at a little past nine, another flight of rooks is arriving, but these are from the Yorkshire side of the Humber: every morning they cross the river (here seven miles in width) into Holderness, retiring to roost in Lincolnshire. They are always one to two hours later in getting to roost than our local birds: to night they appear to drop from the clouds, as in a long straggling body they dash downwards. There is no noisy clamour, hardly indeed a single suppressed 'caw,' as each at once takes his place, not leaving it again, and in a few minutes every black lodger has tucked himself up and is asleep.

JOHN CORDEAUX.

Great Cotes, Ulceby, Lincolnshire,
August 2, 1870.

Extracts from a Memoir intituled 'A Monograph of the Alcidæ.'

By ELLIOTT COUES, A.M., M.D.

(Continued from S. S. 2253).

Genus SYNTHLIBORHAMPHUS, *Brandt.*

Size moderate or rather small; general form stout, compact; head with or without a crest; bill somewhat as in Brachyrhamphus, but much stouter, and shorter for its depth; much compressed throughout, depth at base about half the length of culmen; culmen and gonys moderately curved; gonys straight, ascending; nasal fossæ small and shallow; nostrils subbasal, broadly oval or nearly circular, as in Mergulus, feathered; feathers extending to about the same distance on culmen and keel; on both mandibles retreating rapidly backwards from the point of their furthest extension; those on the upper passing just by the nostrils, but not covering the latter. Wings of usual size and shape in this group; secondaries very short, as in Brachyrhamphus, the tip of the longest not reaching much more than halfway from the carpal joint to the end of the first primary in the closed wing. Tail of usual length, short, broad, nearly square, or very slightly rounded, the feathers very broadly rounded at tip. Tarsi much compressed, anteriorly and laterally transversely scutellate, posteriorly reticulate; about as long as the middle toe without its claw. Outer toe as long as or rather longer than the middle; its claw smaller than that of the middle; tip of inner claw reaching base of middle. Claws small, short, compressed, moderately curved and acute, the inner edge of the middle one somewhat dilated.

With the general appearance of Brachyrhamphus, this genus differs from the latter in the bill and feet. The bill is deeper at the base, and more compressed throughout; the feet are still more different, having very broad transverse scutellation on the anterior face of the tarsus, instead of polygonal reticulation, and are larger, both relatively and absolutely, with longer, much more compressed tarsi, than in Brachyrhamphus. The type of the genus is the old Alca antiqua, *Gm.* A second species occurs, which differs from the type, as far as form is concerned, in a slenderer bill, and in the presence of a conspicuous crest.

Species (2).

Not crested; bill stout, depth at base more than half the length of culmen; white on sides of vertex not extending in advance of the eyes. - - - - - - - -	*antiquus.*
Crested; bill slender, depth at base about equal to half the length of culmen; white on sides of vertex extending along sides of forehead nearly to the bill. - - - - - -	*wurmizusume.*

Synthliborhamphus antiquus (Gmel.) Brandt.—Habitat: American and Asiatic Coasts of the North Pacific. Kamtschatka, Japan Seas. Sitka, Russian America (Mus. Smiths. Inst.) Mus. Acad. Philad.

With the form, etc., typical of the genus, as above described.

Adult.—High breeding plumage. Bill whitish or yellowish, culmen and base of both mandibles abruptly black; legs and feet anteriorly apparently whitish or yellowish; posteriorly, with both surfaces of the webs, black. Head all around, and throat, black; pure and intense above, on the sides below, chin and throat, tinged with fuliginous brown. A conspicuous stripe of pure white beginning over each eye, and extending backwards over the sides of the occiput, connected across the nape by some white feathers, and spreading on the sides and back of the neck, as a large disconnected series of trenchantly defined white streaks. Trace of white on each eyelid. Entire upper parts clear dark plumbeous, blackening on the upper tail-coverts and tail. Upper surface of wings the same, or rather darker, the edge of the wing all along from the elbow, and the exposed parts of primaries, blackish; entire under surface of wings white, except just along the edges, where it is mottled with dusky; the basal portion of the inner webs and shafts of primaries whitish; secondaries like the wing-coverts, or rather darker, their bases whitish. Sides of the body under the wings pure velvety black, in marked contrast to the clear plumbeous of the upper parts and white of the lower. These black feathers are posteriorly greatly elongated, reaching quite to the tail, and overlying the sides of the rump and the flanks, which latter, however, are seen to be pure white on raising the elongated superincumbent feathers. This black along the sides extends anteriorly in front of the wings, and, still strongly contrasted with the plumbeous of the interspcaulars, continues on as a band quite to the nape, which it crosses to become confluent with its fellow of the opposite side. On the sides of the neck it is thickly marked with the pure white streaks already described. The fuliginous black of the chin and throat is continuous with that of the sides of the head as far as the auriculars; further on it merely extends as a point along the middle of the throat, being separated from the black of the sides of the nape by a large white area, an extension to the auriculars of the white which is the colour of the whole under parts, except the sides under the wings, as already described.

Length 9·50 to 10·50; extent 16·75 to 18·25; wing 5·50; tail 1·60; bill along culmen ·60, along rictus 1·20, along gonys ·40, depth at base ·30, width ·20; tarsus 1·00; middle toe and claw 1·25, outer do. 1·15, inner do. 1·00.

Younger.—Bill and feet as above described. "Iris brown," (label). Upper parts as in the adult, but darker, the plumbeous being obscured by dusky, especially on the wing and tail-coverts, and lower back. Forehead, crown, nape and back of neck, sooty black, entirely unrelieved by white streaks, or with only traces of the latter on the sides of the occiput. Eyelids sometimes largely white. No black on the throat or chin; traces of it in a dusky mottling about the base of the bill. White of under parts extending on sides of head below and behind nearly to the eyes, and far around on the sides of the nape, so that only a median nuchal line is left blackish. Sides of body under the wings not pure black, but merely dusky plumbeous, and this not continuous on the feathers over the flanks, these being in some part white, producing a white and plumbeous variegation. The line of this dusky plumbeous hardly extends in front of the wings to the sides of the neck. Under parts white, as before, the bases of the inner webs of the primaries rather more white than in the adult.

The above described differences between the adult and young are very decided, and might suggest a distinction of species, were not various means between the extremes forthcoming. Beyond these variations in plumage the species is very constant in characters, with the exception of the bill. This differs a good deal as to its size and shape; but nevertheless usually preserves the specific characters which distinguish it from that of Wurmizusume. Thus the difference in length between the bills of two perfectly mature examples, absolutely identical in plumage, and in all other respects, save length of bill, amounts to a tenth of an inch along the culmen. This difference being accompanied by a corresponding difference in depth and width, gives a readily appreciable difference in shape of the bill.

The only species to which the present bears any special resemblance is Wurmizusume. The comparative characters of the latter are dwelt upon at length in the article immediately succeeding.

It is barely possible that the bird here described is not the veritable Alca antiqua, *Gm.* ("Antient auk" of Pennant). In the description of these authors the upper parts are said to be dusky or sooty black, whereas, as will be seen by the description, the subject of the present article has these parts clear plumbeous. But we have just seen that the young of the present bird has the upper parts decidedly darker and duller than the adult; in fact tending, especially upon the wings and lower back, to dusky. The limits within which the species is known to vary in this respect are sufficiently wide to allow its reference to the bird of Pennant, Latham and Gmelin; especially when it is remembered that the particular descriptive terms used by these authors may not have been critically correct. It seems unnecessary, and it would be perhaps unjustifiable, to attempt to discriminate the present species from Alca antiqua, upon the grounds just mentioned. They had best be regarded as the same, at least until suites of specimens may determine the existence of two species, differing in the particulars above mentioned. No indications of a distinction of species can be found in the extensive series of specimens at present contained in American collections.

This species, in the condition here described as that of the adult, is the Uria senicula, *Pallas;* and should bear the name of Synthliborhamphus seniculus in the event of its not proving the same as Alca antiqua, *Gm.* Mergulus cirrhocephalus, *Vigors* (Arctica cirrhocephala, *Gray*), is the same bird, in the same condition of maturity. The species has no other synonyms of consequence, except those resulting from its reference to several different genera.

In breeding plumage it is a very handsome bird, being in fact—with the exception of Wurmizusume—the handsomest of the Urinæ. It is of frequent occurrence along the coast and among the islands of the North Pacific; extending, on the Asiatic side, to Japan, and on the American, to Washington Territory, U. S. It apparently migrates southward in winter. It breeds in the vicinity of Sitka, R. A. It is well represented by numerous specimens in the collections of the Philadelphia Academy and of the Smithsonian Institution. It has been figured by Temminck and Schlegel, and by Audubon.

Synthliborhamphus Wurmizusume (Temm.), Coues. — Habitat: Asiatic and American coasts of the North Pacific; south to Japan and Washington Territory, U. S. Specimens in Mus. Acad. Philadelphia, and Mus. Smiths. Inst.

Bill more slender and elongated than in the type of the genus, the depth at base less, and the compression not so great, the sides of the bill being less vertical; rictus nearly straight. Rather larger than S. antiquus.

Adult.—Bill decidedly yellow (in the dried state), the ridge of upper mandible alone black. Feet dull livid bluish, the webs dusky (feet dusky yellowish in the dried state). "Eye brilliant gray, iris black" (label). A large conspicuous crest springing from the extreme forehead of a dozen (more or less) slender elongated feathers, not recurved, but extending straight backwards quite to the occiput. A large conspicuous series of white feathers on each side of the top of the head, extending from the base of the crest, on the forehead far in advance of the eyes, to the side of the nape; there more or less confluent with each other, and then dispersed as isolated white streaks over the sides of the neck to the shoulders. In many specimens, however, apparently quite adult, these white stripes are hardly, if at all, apparent beyond the nape. Rest of head, including chin and upper part of throat, sooty or fuscous blackish, sometimes with a cinereous tint; this colour extending as far as the interscapular region, from which point the upper parts are more decidedly plumbeous, only the wings and tail being somewhat darker and more fuscous. Sides under the wings plumbeous black quite to the flanks; this colour also extending forward in front of the wings and continuous with that of the sides of the neck and head. Under surface of wings pure white, except a little dusky clouding along the edge; bases of primaries and the greater portion of their inner webs white, deepening very gradually through a continuously deepening shade of brownish gray, into dusky at the tips. Entire under parts (except the sides, as just described) pure white.

Length 10·50 to 11·00; extent 18·00 to 18·50; wing 5·50; tail 1·75; tarsus 1·00; middle toe and claw 1·25, outer 1·20, inner 1·00; bill along culmen ·70, rictus 1·10; gonys ·40; height at base ·25 to ·30, width about the same.

Younger.—Bill and feet as above; (bill sometimes, however, wholly blackish). Without a crest; no white feathers about head, or only slight traces thereof. Face, including region just about the base of the bill, both above and below, crown and sides of the head to the level of the commissure, with nape and back of neck, plumbeous dusky; other upper parts, particularly the wings, the same, but most of the back with a more decided tint of plumbeous. Under wing-coverts and primaries as in the adult. Sides under the wings narrowly fusco-plumbeous, the lengthened feathers over the flanks variegated with white. Entire under parts otherwise white; this colour extending far around on the sides of the upper neck, nape and occiput.

Considerable variation in plumage as well as in size, and to a degree, in shape of bill, is exhibited by the numerous specimens examined. The differences in the bill are chiefly those of size, the relative proportions of the various measurements being pretty constantly preserved. The bill is always slenderer, and usually longer than that of Antiquus, approaching in this respect the bills of the true Brachyrhamphi. The size of the whole bird varies somewhat, but not to any remarkable degree. In apparently equally adult specimens, the two series of white feathers, which form conspicuous stripes on the sides of the vertex and nape, vary much in length. Sometimes they spread out on the sides of the hind-neck to almost as great an extent as is witnessed in the most highly-plumaged specimens of Antiquus; again they may stop abruptly on the occiput, or at least on the nape. The comparative amount of dusky and plumbeous on the upper parts is various, as is also the intensity of either of these hues. Thus a specimen from Japan in the collection of the Philadelphia Academy has the upper parts, including the wing-coverts, bluish ashy, or bluish plumbeous, light enough to form a marked contrast with the band of nearly black which crosses the nuchal region, and descends on either side under the wings. In this specimen, also, the bill is blackish, although it is evidently an adult bird, having a crest an inch long. There is sometimes much white on the eyelids, sometimes none. The outline of the white on the sides of the hind head and of the neck varies; the younger the bird, the more the white encroaches on these parts.

It is not ascertained positively that the crest which so strongly characterizes perfect specimens of this species is a constant feature, that is, obtained at a certain age, and ever afterwards worn. Very possibly, it is only assumed during the breeding season; and falls off afterwards, so that perfectly adult winter specimens may be without it. It is at all events not to be enumerated among the infallible diagnostic points of the species.

Compared with S. antiquus, the species is at once distinguished, when in adult breeding plumage, by the presence of a crest, and the different extent of the white stripes and streaks upon the head, nape and neck. (Consult descriptions above given). These differences aside, it is a larger bird, on an average, though some specimens do not exceed in size some examples of Antiquus. The bill is slenderer, though not necessarily longer, more acute at the tip, comparatively not so deep at the base, and rather less compressed; the culmen, rictus and gonys straighter. The identification of very young birds, however, is sometimes attended with difficulty; and some specimens in the present collections cannot, in fact, be satisfactorily determined. This state of affairs, however, is by no means unparalleled in other cases of perfectly distinct species, and by no means militates against the belief in the specified distinction of the two birds now under consideration. The adults cannot by any possibility be mistaken for each other.

This species is well represented in all its variety, by numerous specimens in the collections of the Philadelphia Academy and the Smithsonian Institution; though not contained, as far as heard from, in any other American cabinets. It is of frequent occurrence on the coasts of the North Pacific, and appears to be particularly abundant in the vicinity of Japan, whence most of the specimens described or recorded have been obtained. Its occurrence on the coast of the United States is open to question. Several specimens of S. antiquus (at least of the bird described in this paper under that name) are in our collections from Washington Territory, labelled "Brachyrhamphus Temminckii," and these appear to represent the species whose habits, etc., are alluded to by Drs. Cooper and Suckley, vol. xii., part 2, of the Pacific Railroad Reports (Nat. Hist. Wash. Terr. p. 287, above cited) under the name of Brachyrhamphus Temminckii. But the description there given is that of the true Temminckii, having been copied from Mr. Cassin's article on the 'Birds of North America.'

The name which heads this article has priority over "Temminckii" of Prof. Brandt, and is therefore to be adopted, though its barbarous character is, assuredly, a matter of regret. It varies in orthography with different writers.

(To be continued.)

List of the Dermaptera discovered by J. K. Lord, Esq., in Egypt, and in the adjoining regions; with descriptions of the new species. By F. WALKER, F.L.S.

THE species of Dermaptera found by Mr. Lord are not numerous, and, with a few exceptions, are not of much interest. Periplaneta Americana and P. orientalis are not natives of Egypt, but have been spread over the world by means of commerce. The genus Eremiaphila is remarkable on account of its adaptation to the colour of the soil on which it dwells. The genus Dericorys has a peculiar structure, and includes a single species which has hitherto been only found in Egypt. The two species of locusts Acridium peregrinum and Pachytylus cinerascens were common in these regions, but no swarms of them occurred during Mr. Lord's stay there. A. peregrinum is the locust whose devastations in Algeria and in Syria have lately been recorded. P. cinerascens and P. migratorius are considered by some authors as varieties of one species, by others as two distinct species. I have not observed any intermediate forms, and I believe that they should be considered as specifically distinct, and that P. cinerascens has been often mentioned by the name of P. migratorius. The former species is more widely spread than the latter, and is abundant in New Zealand, where it is occasionally of a much darker colour than it is in other localities, and is sometimes wholly blackish. The devastating locust of S. Africa is another species.

Fam. FORFICULIDÆ.—Gen. LABIDURA, *Leach.*

1. *Flavipes.* Forficula flavipes, *Fabr. Ent. Syst.* ii. 2. Cairo. Wâdy Gennèh. Wâdy Amara. Wâdy Gharandel. Inhabits also the West Coast of Africa. The apical forceps is longest in the winged state, and thereby adapted to its office in the unfolding of the wings.

Fam. POLYPHAGIDÆ.—Gen. POLYPHAGA, *Brullé.*

2. *Ægyptiaca.* Blatta Ægyptiaca, *Linn. Syst. Nat.* ii., 687. Cairo. Inhabits Malta, Greece, and some parts of Asia.

Fam. BLATTIDÆ.—Gen. PERIPLANETA, *Burm.*

3. *Americana.* Blatta Americana, *Linn. Syst. Nat.* ii., 687. Cairo.
4. *Orientalis.* Blatta orientalis, *Linn. Syst. Nat.* ii., 688. Cairo.
5. *Lateralis,* Walk. Cat. Blatt. 136. Cairo.

Fam. MANTIDÆ.—Gen. EREMIAPHILA, *Lefebvre.*

6. *Audouini,* Lefebvre, Ann. Soc. Ent. Fr. iv. 482. Rafla.

Gen. BLEPHARIS, *Serv.*

7. *Mendica.* Mantis mendica, *Fabr. Ent. Syst.* ii. 17. Akeck. Mount Sinai.

Gen. MANTIS, *Linn.*

8. *Religiosa,* Linn. Syst. Nat. ii., 690. Souakin. Wâdy Ferran. Inhabits S. Europe.

9. *Simulacrum,* Fabr. Ent. Syst. ii. 21. Cairo. Heliopolis. Harkeko. Inhabits Hindostan and W. Africa.

Fam. GRYLLIDÆ.—Gen. GRYLLOTALPA, *Ray.*

10. *Africana,* Pal. Beauv. Ins. 229. Cairo. Mount Sinai. Inhabits Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

Gen. GRYLLUS, *Linn.*

11. *Capensis.* Acheta Capensis, *Fabr. Ent. Syst.* ii., 31. Akeck. Mount Sinai. Inhabits S. Europe, S. Asia, Australia and America.

Gen. PHYLLOPTERA, *Serv.*

12. *Proteifolia*, Burm. Handb. Ent. ii. 692. Hor Tamanib.

Fam. TRYXALIDÆ.—Gen. TRYXALIS, *Fabr.*

13. *Unguiculata*, Ramb. Faune And. 72. Cairo. Heliopolis. Souakin. Harkeko. Mount Sinai.

Gen. PYRGOMORPHA, *Serv.*

14. *Rosea.* Truxalis rosea, *Charp. Hor. Ent.* 128. Cairo. Souakin. Wâdy Gennèh. Mount Sinai.

Fam. PAMPHAGIDÆ.—Gen. AKICERA, *Serv.*

15. *Informis. Female.*—Cinereous, compressed, apterous, thickly and minutely tuberculate. Head short; vertex concave, elliptical; front with four keels which diverge towards the face, and are armed with minute obtuse black spines. Eyes fusiform, testaceous, transverse. Antennæ nine-jointed, flat, dilated, short. Prothorax highly keeled, the crest rounded, its hind part spinose; fore border and hind border elongated, acute. Abdomen keeled, shorter than the thorax, the crest armed with spines. Legs short, stout; hind femora broad, with spines above and beneath. Length of the body 9 lines. The specimen described seems to be in an early state of life. Harkeko.

Fam. PHYMATIDÆ.—Gen. POECILOCERA, *Serv.*

16. *Bufonia.* Decticus bufonius, *Klug. Symb. Phys.* 3, 2; pl. 25, f. 3, 4. Hor Tamanib? Wâdy Ferran. Wâdy Nash. Mount Sinai. The specimens from Hor Tamanib are in a very early state of growth, and may belong to another species.

17. *Vignandii*, Guer. Lefebvre, Voy. Abyss. 338; pl. 6, f. 4. The specimen figured in the above-mentioned work is much smaller than the individuals here recorded. Wâdy Gennèh. Wâdy Amara.

Fam. ACRIDIDÆ.—Gen. DERICORYS, *Serv.*

18. *Albidula*, Serv. Hist. Orth. 639. Wâdy Sidri. Wâdy Nash.

Gen. CYRTACANTHAERIS, *Walk.*

19. *Flavicornis.* Gryllus flavicornis, *Fabr. Ent. Syst.* ii. 52. Zayla.

20. *Compta*, Walk. Cat. Derm. iv. 613. Souakin.

Gen. ACRIDIUM, *Geoffr.*

21. *Peregrinum*, Oliv. Voy. Emp. Orth. ii. 424. Akeck. Rafla. Zayla.

22. *Albidiferum*, Walk. Cat. Derm. iv. 627.

Gen. CALOPTENUS, *Burm.*

23. *Serapis.* Calliptamus Serapis, *Serv. Hist. Orth.* 689. Mount Sinai.

24. *Testaceus*, Walk. Cat. Derm. iv. 685. Wâdy Gennèh.

25. *Scriptipennis*, Walk. Cat. Derm. iv. 686. Wâdy Ferran.

26. *Coneisus*, Walk. Cat. Derm. iv. 687. Zayla.

27. *Signatus*, Walk. Cat. Derm. iv. 687. Souakin.

28. *Turbidus*, Walk. Cat. Derm. vi. 688. Shoobra.

29. *Mutator*, Walk. Cat. Derm. iv. 689. Cairo. Shoobra. Souakin. Zayla. Wâdy Gennèh. Wâdy Ferran. Mount Sinai.

30. *Cincticollis*, Walk. Cat. Derm. iv. 689. Mount Sinai.

Fam. ŒDIPODIDÆ.—Gen. PACHYTYLUS, *Fisch.*

31. *Cinerascens.* Gryllus cinerascens, *Fabr. Ent. Syst.* ii. 59. Akeck. Harkeko.

Gen. ŒDIPODA, *Latr.*

32. *Arenaria*, Lucas, Expl. Scient. Alg. Art. iv; Atlas Orth. pl. 4, f. 1. Souakin. Harkeko Rafla.

33. *Cærulans.* Acridium cærulans, *Oliv. Enc. Meth.* vi. 225. Tôr. Mount Sinai. Inhabits S. Europe.

34. *Latifasciata.* *Male.*—Testaceous, stout, whitish beneath. Head whitish, excepting the vertex, which has a furrow on each side of the middle keel; fastigium widening towards its fore border, which is slightly notched; front with four slight keels which diverge much towards the face. Eyes short, elliptical, rather prominent. Antennæ slender, whitish at the base. Prothorax with an extremely slight keel; fore part short, with two transverse impressed lines; hind part elongated; hind border forming a slightly oblique angle. Legs mostly whitish; hind femora with a testaceous subapical band and with testaceous tips, and on the inner side with a black interrupted stripe. Wings pellucid; veins whitish. Fore wings testaceous, and with brown marks on one-third of the surface from the base; three exterior brown patches, two of them on the hind border, where there are three more exterior brown dots. Hind wings with a very broad black

band, which is broadest in the middle. Length of the body 13½ lines; expansion of the fore wings 29½ lines. Plate 7, fig. 9 of the Dermaptera in Savigny's work on Egypt seems to represent this species. Rafla.

35. *Tricincta. Male and female.* Testaceous, whitish beneath. Head with the vertex like that of Œ. latifasciata, but rather narrower; front with the usual keels. Eyes fawn-colour, elliptical, rather prominent. Antennæ slender, with some blackish bands. Prothorax like that of Œ. latifasciata, but with the hind border rounded and tip elongated. Hind femora with two blackish patches on the inner side and a subapical brown patch on the outer side. Fore wings with three broad brown or blackish bands; first band antemedial; second postmedial; third subapical. Hind wings colourless, with a very broad black band. Length of the body 9—13 lines; expansion of the fore wings 24—32 lines. The three bands on the fore wings distinguish this species from Œ. octofasciata. Wâdy Gennèh. Wâdy Ferran. Mount Sinai.

36. *Terminalis. Male.*—Testaceous. Head whitish, except the vertex, which has a slight furrow on each side of the slight middle keel; front with four well-defined keels which diverge towards the face. Eyes fawn-colour, short, elliptical, rather prominent. Antennæ slender. Prothorax like that of Œ. tricincta. Pectus whitish. Hind femora with a blackish disk on each side. Wings pellucid. Fore wings with three bands; first band testaceous, basal, very broad, with brown dots limited by a blackish line; second and third bands blackish, second irregular, third apical. Hind wings with a very broad black band. Length of the body 11 lines; expansion of the fore wings 26 lines. Mount Sinai.

37. *Obscurata. Male.*—Testaceous. Vertex narrower than in the three preceding species; middle keel very slight; the four keels of the front very strongly marked. Eyes elliptical. Antennæ slender. Prothorax like that of the two preceding species, but with a more distinct keel. Pectus and under side of the abdomen pale yellow. Hind femora with a blackish stripe on the inner side, and another beneath. Wings pellucid. Fore wings with several blackish dots and a few blackish patches, the largest patch forming a subapical band; veins in the exterior part of the wing mostly black. Hind wings with two broad black bands, the second apical; veins black, except towards the base, where the wings are pale testaceous. Length of the body 11½ lines; expansion of the fore wings 26 lines. The

markings of the fore wings distinguish it from Œ. octofusciata. Wâdy Gennèh.

38. *Rubescens.* *Male.*—Tawny. Vertex narrow, like that of Œ. obscurata, but with a more distinct keel; front with four well-defined keels. Eyes elliptical. Antennæ slender, with several blackish bands. Prothorax with a very slight keel; fore part very short; hind border rounded, hardly angular. Pectus and under side of abdomen pale yellowish. Hind femora with a blackish interrupted stripe on the inner side, and with a row of five blackish points on the outer side. Wings cinereous-hyaline. Fore wings with numerous irregular ringlets, which are formed by black veins. Hind wings with black veins. Length of the body 12½ lines; expansion of the fore wings 26 lines. Wâdy Gennèh.

39. *Tincta.* *Male.*—Tawny, slender. Head and prothorax with some small piceous marks. Vertex narrow, with a very slight keel; front with four distinct keels which diverge slightly towards the face. Eyes ferruginous, elliptical. Antennæ slender, piceous towards the tips. Prothorax with a slight keel; fore part rugose, very short; hind border rounded. Hind femora with some black points in three rows on the outer side. Fore wings cinereous, with three black patches, the first near the base, the third beyond the middle. Hind wings brown; veins black. Length of the body 8½ lines; expansion of the fore wings 20 lines. Hor Tamanib.

40. *Variegata.* *Male and Female.*—Tawny, slender, paler beneath. Vertex narrow, with no middle keel; front with four strongly marked keels which diverge towards the face. Eyes elliptical, rather prominent. Antennæ slender, piceous towards the tips. Prothorax short, with a slight keel; fore part with two transverse impressed lines; a black patch on each side including a pale testaceous dot; hind border rounded, in no wise angular. Hind femora with three black patches on the inner side. Fore wings colourless, testaceous towards the base; a brown costal stripe extending from the base to nearly half the length, and including an elongated colourless spot; some exterior brown streaks; exterior costal sectors clouded with brown. Hind wings pellucid, with an irregular black band, which is much abbreviated in front, and with a small black apical mark; veins black, whitish towards the base. Length of the body 7—9 lines; expansion of the fore wings 16—20 lines. It differs somewhat from the typical form of Œdipoda. Cairo. Souakin.

Gen. STENOBOTHRUS, *Fisch.*

41. *Lætus.* *Male.*—Ferruginous, testaceous beneath. Head and prothorax with two blackish stripes, which are bordered with yellowish concisely on the inner side and diffusedly on the outer side. Vertex in front elongate-conical, depressed; front with four distinct keels which diverge slightly towards the face. Eyes elliptical, oblique. Antennæ slender. Prothorax with a slight keel; the two stripes broader than those on the head, and containing some pale marks; hind border rounded. Hind femora with three black patches on the inner side. Wings cinereous. Fore wings with some brown patches and spots, and with a few black costal patches, of which the first is elongated and includes some small pale marks. Hind wings with black veins. Length of the body 8½ lines; expansion of the fore wings 19 lines. *Female.*—Larger and rather paler than the male. Length of the body 12 lines; expansion of the fore wings 26 lines. Cairo.

42. *Limosus.* *Male.*—Dingy testaceous. Head with two oblique piceous streaks on each side between the eye and the hind border; vertex punctured, conical and depressed in front; front punctured, with four slight keels which diverge towards the face. Eyes piceous, oblique, elliptical. Antennæ piceous, slender, testaceous towards the base. Prothorax short, with a slight keel; fore part with two transverse impressed lines; hind part slightly elongated; hind border slightly angular. Hind femora with three black patches on the inner side. Fore wings cinereous, with three large black patches and some black points; third patch much elongated, occupying more than one-third of the length from the tip. Hind wings brownish; veins black. Length of the body 10 lines; expansion of the fore wings 20 lines. Hor Tamanib.

Gen. OXYCORYPHUS, *Fisch.*

43. *Venustus.* *Female.*—Pale green or testaceous. Head and prothorax with a broad deep green stripe. Vertex with a flat, angular and acute fastigium; front elongate, slightly oblique, with four slight keels, the inner pair slightly diverging towards the face. Eyes testaceous, oblique, elongate-oval. Antennæ ferruginous, flat, slightly lanceolate, much longer than the head. Prothorax with a very slight keel, and with two very slight transverse impressed lines; a short, slightly angular whitish line on each side of the stripe; an

abbreviated brown stripe on each side, including a short oblique whitish streak; hind part slightly elongated; hind border slightly angular. Fore wings green; a brown discoidal streak, including a few elongated pale testaceous points or little streaks; in some cases tips reddish. Hind wings pellucid. Length of the body 10½ lines; expansion of the fore wings 18 lines. Cairo.

Gen. CHROTOGONUS, *Serv.*

44. *Lugubris.* Ommexecha lugubre, *Blanch. Ann. Soc. Ent. Fr.* v. 616; pl. 22, f. 5. Cairo. Heliopolis. Souakin. Harkeko.

FRANCIS WALKER.

Unusual Oviposition of Rhodites Rosæ, Linn.—As two years ago I published in this journal a case of an unusual number of normal bedeguars on the common briar (Zool. S. S. 1206), I think it expedient to use the same channel for the record of a case of abnormal egg-laying by the same insect, Rhodites Rosæ, *Linn.* There is now before me a sprig of the briar, the principal stem of which is of about the thickness of a goose-quill. Every alternate leaf of this twig presents one or several leaflets crowned with one or two very small tufts of bedeguar bristles. The stem is quite free from them. Beginning with the lowest leaf, I find two tufts on the midrib of the same left leaflets; the next alternate leaf possesses a tuft in the axil of the two leaflets nearest to the stem, two tufts on the nearest left leaflet, one tuft on the second right leaflet, and a tuft on both the third leaflets; the stems of the third and fourth alternate leaves are stunted, and each leaflet of these exhibits one tuft; the fifth alternate leaf shows the left leaflet of the second pair of leaflets provided with one tuft, and the following pair of leaflets is likewise adorned. I give this detailed account, because, to my mind, it proves the *modus operandi* of the laying female as plainly as any written record. The insect in question must have been physically exhausted, or else of too weak a constitution to choose the hard stem of the rose for the deposition of its eggs; yet, impelled by the *twin* of reason, instinct, it wanted to get rid of its eggs. So instead of girdling the hard stem by a series of punctures, producing a many-celled bedeguar, it rambled over the whole twig, and, puncturing the soft leaves in one or more places, deposited in each spot a single egg. Vagaries of this sort have been observed before in this species, as far as an egg or two are concerned, but never yet to my knowledge has it been noticed, that a whole batch of eggs has been disseminated by the present Rhodites in the manner here described; and the race would be doomed speedily to perish, if it should become the rule, unless indeed an appropriate increase of the size of the solitary cell thus created took place, which would allow the inmate to sustain its life, by feeding on the vegetal juices, after the manner of allied species. But so long as this does not occur, the afflux of sap, increased as it is by the single irritating puncture, is wholly inadequate to supply to the larva sufficient nourishment, and the tuft generally dries up before the former has attained the full-grown state.—*Albert Müller; South Norwood, July* 24, 1870.

Accident to the Rhinoceros at the Zoological Gardens.—The young male single-horned rhinoceros at the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, has just afforded a very singular instance of self-mutilation. The three magnificent specimens are now located in the new elephant house and yards. On Wednesday last the male and female of the single-horned species were in the adjoining yards, when the male attempted to upheave the massive iron railings dividing them by placing his horn under the lower transverse bar and raising it. Fortunately, the inclosure was constructed with a perfect knowledge of the enormous strength of these pachyderms, and could not be moved; but the animal made repeated attempts, and at last the thick massive horn was torn away from the head and fell into the yard. At first there was a considerable loss of blood, and the animal roared lustily for a few minutes. He soon, however, became calm, and is now as quiet as usual. The large surface exposed was shortly covered with flies, and, to prevent their ova being deposited, Mr. Bartlett most judiciously applied a coating of neat's foot oil. The animal now takes his food as usual, and seems none the worse for the accident. The fact that an animal should of his own accord injure himself to such an extent is another proof, if one were wanting, that the sensitiveness to pain is not so great in animals of low cerebral organization as in man. The three young male giraffes, whose arrival in London we noticed a few weeks since, have been deposited in the Gardens by Messrs. Hagenbeck and Rice.—*Editor of 'Field.'*

Rhinoceros detaching its Horn.—The "accident" that happened to the large single-horned rhinoceros in the Zoological Gardens was mentioned in last week's 'Field' (p. 152). It is not unprecedented, as the reader will find by referring to my contributions to the 'Field,' No. 871, p. 192, and No. 877, p. 344. Several years ago, an animal of the same species knocked off its horn in the Zoological Garden at Moscow, and soon afterwards began to grow another, the detached horn being preserved in the museum of that city; and before learning of that occurrence I had argued on the probability of the so-called horns of these animals being occasionally shed and renewed, as will be seen by reference to the communications mentioned.—*From the 'Field.'*

Nesting of the Hobby in South Devon.—The keeper here tells me that a pair of hobbies nested again in the park this summer. He destroyed the young ones before they were fully fledged, and shot both the old birds. I saw the remains of the male bird yesterday among a heap of sparrowhawks, jays and other delinquents that had paid for their trespasses with their lives.—*Murray A. Mathew; Gidleigh Park, Chagford, South Devon, August* 16, 1870.

Note on the Eastern Range of the European Merlin.—With reference to the eastern range of this species, referred to by Captain Feilden (S. S. 2261), I may mention that I have seen specimens from Eastern Siberia, obtained near the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk.—*J. H. Gurney; Marldon, Totnes, July* 30, 1870.

Note on the Dark-coloured Harrier of South Africa.—The dark-coloured harrier of South Africa (*Circus maurus*), alluded to in the 'Zoologist' (S. S. 2261) in a quotation from the 'Field,' is specifically distinct from the dark or melanous race of Montagu's harrier (*Circus cineraceus*). The *adult* male of the dark variety of the latter assumes the same gray dress as the male of the ordinary race, except that the gray is of a much darker and more smoky hue, whereas the adult male of Circus maurus is gray only on the outer webs of the primaries and of some of the wing-coverts. Circus maurus is, moreover, a considerably larger bird than Circus cineraceus.—*J. H. Gurney.*

Black Montagu's Harrier (Circus cineraceus, *var.;* C. ater, *Vieill.*).—In the 'Zoologist' (Zool. 1806) Mr. Nicholls mentions finding the entire egg of a sky lark in a Montagu's harrier, which, as he informed me in a private communication, was shot at the Praul Head, South Devon, by a farmer, and I have read of several other instances. In the 'Naturalist,' for example, for 1852 (p. 19), Mr. Cooper, of the Warrington Museum, records skinning a Montagu's harrier and discovering an unbroken sky lark's egg inside it. I quote these facts because they are a perfect corroboration of the interesting note by Mr. B. Bates. In the same letter, Mr. Nicholls alludes to a young male of this species, the colour of which was "a uniform very dark brown, appearing almost black at a little distance, except a broken patch of white at the nape." I think this was evidently one of the dark race. I have seen the Canterbury and Seville specimens, and with regard to the Dover one, I think it is one of two examples mentioned in Morris's 'British Birds,' though I have not that work at hand to refer to. He states that two Montagu's harriers "of a uniform dark colour," in the collection of Mr. Chaffey, of Dodington, in Kent, were shot by the preventive men at Dover. One of them, at Mr. Chaffey's decease, became the property of Mr. Scott, of Chudleigh, in Devon, who lately showed it to my father, who also last year saw a female of the same melanism in the Exeter Museum, which Mr. D'Urban, the curator, informed him had been killed at Lyme Regis. I have seen a nice specimen in the collection of Mr. Hancock, of Newcastle, and one in the Chichester Museum, shot at Selsea. Mr. Stevenson ('Birds of Norfolk,' vol. i., p. 42) enumerates no less than ten, so that this melanism, or black variety of Montagu's harrier, cannot be very uncommon.—*J. H. Gurney, jun.; 2, Beta Place, Alpha Road, N. W., August* 1, 1870.

[The following is the passage in 'Birds of Norfolk' to which Mr. Gurney refers:— "This bird is extremely interesting, as exhibiting a melanism in the plumage of this species, occasionally though rarely noticed in foreign as well as British specimens, and which thus, accidentally as it were, completes the chain between the moor buzzard and the ordinary harrier type. Mr. Gurney, who has met with several examples of this variety, informs me that 'the old male is of a very dark smoky-gray; the female and young are entire purplish chocolate-brown.' Two French specimens, an adult male and a nestling, will be found in the Raptorial collection of the Norwich Museum, and Mr. Gurney has also seen another female from Abyssinia, besides the three following, all killed in England: one immature example, much resembling the Yarmouth bird, preserved in the Canterbury Museum, and killed in Kent; a young male, shot at Selsea, in the Chichester Museum; and a female, most probably adult, but not so dark as the Yarmouth bird, in Mr. Newcome's collection, shot by himself some years back from a nest in Feltwell Sedge Fen, in this county. To these last I can also add two other British-killed specimens of this melanite type—one, as I am informed by Mr. Alfred Newton, a male, shot at North Chapel, near Petworth, Sussex, in either 1855 or the following year, now in the possession of Mr. Knox (author of 'The Birds of Sussex'), who examined it in company with the late Mr. Yarrell; and the other an adult female, killed at Yarmouth in July, 1855, which I recently discovered in the Dennis collection at the Bury Museum. 'Viellot (writes Mr. Gurney) made this form a distinct species, under the name of Circus ater (Dict. Hist. Nat. iv., p. 459); but in the Revue de Zool. for 1850, p. 82, is a note by Dr. Pucheran, intended to show that it is only a variety of C. cineraceus. Prince Buonaparte also confirms this view in p. 492 of the same volume; and I have no doubt that it is merely a variety, though I suspect it may be an hereditary one from so many instances of it occurring.'"—*Edward Newman.*]

The Black Variety of Circus cineraceus.—Some few weeks back I sent an account to the 'Field' of a hawk which I received, supposed to be a black variety of Montagu's harrier. About a fortnight ago, in the same wood, its mate the female was seen, with three young ones. One was shot on the 28th, and I shot one myself on the 29th of last month. The breasts are of a most beautiful red-brown, the back and head almost black, the feathers edged with the same colour, brown. They are both of them females. I have sent you this, thinking that some of your readers may know from the young whether they are the common Montagu's harrier, or whether they are a distinct black harrier.—*B. Bates; Eastbourne.—From the 'Field.'*

White Eggs of a Robin.—Obtained this season a nest of the robin, containing five perfectly pure white eggs.—*E. Charles Moor; Great Bealings, Woodbridge, Suffolk, August* 4, 1870.

Grayheaded Wagtail near Clifton.—On the 16th of June last I obtained a pair of grayheaded wagtails in a field near Clifton. As in the previous instance of the capture of this species recorded by me, they were associating with specimens of the yellow wagtail.—*Marcus S. C. Rickards; Clifton, August* 12, 1870.

Noisy Gatherings of the House Sparrow.—The occasional noisy meetings of the house sparrow, usually about six or seven in number, and frequently held in a low hedge, will be familiar to all your readers. On these occasions their attention is so entirely engaged by the business in hand, that they may often be approached within a few feet, and I once saw a cat dash into a party of this kind and make one of them an easy prey, from their total disregard of their usual caution: but I have never yet met with what seemed to me a satisfactory explanation of the cause of these meetings. I have always noticed that these little parties consist of one female bird only and several males, who flutter round her with drooping wings, keeping up an incessant chattering all the time, while she responds to their attentions in a coquettish way, occasionally making a coy peck at one or another, and I believe that these meetings are always convened for purposes of flirtation, ending probably in one of the male aspirants being selected as the lady's mate. A little bit of genuine love-making is always carried on in a very quiet way between the sexes of these birds, and is very different to the hubbub that always characterizes the assemblages to which I have referred.—*Gerard Barton; Fundenhall Grange, Wymondham, July* 28, 1870.

White Egg of a Linnet.—Took this season a pure white egg of the common gray linnet.—*E. Charles Moor.*

Immense Flock of Starlings.—Late in the evening of the 19th of March an immense flock of starlings was noticed flying E. by N.E. They seemed to extend as far as one could see both ways, flying in close company and about one hundred and fifty yards high. I mention this, as they are seldom seen in such numbers in this neighbourhood.—*Id.*

Reparation of a maimed Beak in the Chough.—In the 'Zoologist' (S. S. 1015) my father mentions that a tame chough, which had been sent to me from Cornwall, having broken half an inch off its upper mandible, the beak after a time commenced growing again, until it became as perfect as ever. I am sorry to say this bird died last December. Its mandibles are two inches and a half in length, attenuated at the ends, with the tips slightly crossed, closely resembling one which was at the Zoological Gardens a short time ago.—*J. H. Gurney, jun.; July* 29, 1870.

Swallow taking a Fly from a Horse.—The other day I saw a swallow hover for a second before a horse feeding in a meadow, and take a fly from his shoulder. This may be no unusual occurrence, but I never noticed it before.—*Murray A. Mathew.*

On the Nesting of the Common Swift.—Wishing to add the eggs of the common swift (*Cypselus apus*) to my collection, I went over to Wandsford, a village near Driffield, in this neighbourhood, where large numbers of these birds breed under the tiles of the high warehouses, &c., and having, with the assistance of two able persons, reared a long ladder against the eaves, I ascended, and was rather surprised to find the old swifts sitting under the tiles in a very stupid manner, but no nest could I find. The birds seemed in no way alarmed by being disturbed, and persistently refused to take flight, even when the tiles were lifted off and the birds moved with the hand. Although the places whereon the birds were sitting were quite warm, there was not the slightest sign of any nest: then what made the birds so stupid? not because it was late in the evening, for there were hundreds flying and screeching in all directions. Now I have often heard, and many people believe, that the swift is unable to rise off the ground: here then was an opportunity of testing the point, so choosing a level piece of ground, I put five or six of them on it one by one, and holding my flat hand over them for a short time I suddenly withdrew it, and the birds in every instance rose with little difficulty and joined their companions circling aloft. On a subsequent visit to the same place I took two nests, one containing two eggs and the other only one; the old birds were on them in each instance, one escaping by creeping out of reach and the other by flight. These nests were very compactly glued together by a strong viscid substance (perhaps saliva) of a whitish transparent colour, and much resembling the gummy material used by the puss moth in forming its cocoon; they were composed of straws, &c., at the bottom, and lined with the black feathers of the rook. During the whole time I was searching about the buildings for nests the swifts were screaming in all directions, when suddenly one would bend its course straight at me, and with a loud scream appear as if it were going to dash itself against my head, but when about a yard off would change its course with the quickness of thought, and speed past me and over the roof with immense velocity: others made feints to enter the holes beneath the tiles, and in some few instances did so for a short time, yet these were the only nests I could find, though no doubt there would be many others. It seems also that they vary a great deal in the time of their commencing to breed, as some nests were only partly completed, whilst the eggs I got were very much incubated: this was on the 28th of June.—*F. Boyes; Beverley, August* 20, 1870.

Nesting of the Quail in East Yorkshire.—On the 24th of July last I had the pleasure of finding a quail sitting on eleven eggs near this town: it suffered itself to be approached to within about a foot, and then rose with a sharpish scream, and a quick flight rather resembling that of a snipe. On again visiting the place I found the eggs cold and evidently forsaken. The nest was situated on the side of the railway embankment, amongst grass, &c., and consisted of a very few dead grasses in a hollow (no doubt scraped out by the bird), and seemed too small for the number of eggs, which were not arranged neatly therein, but some were on the top of the others; all but one contained embryo chicks. The eggs were of the usual yellowish ground colour, blotched with rich umber-brown; one or two of them looked as if the colour had been partly wiped off, like some eggs we find of the grouse species. It would appear that the quail is a late breeder, as it not unfrequently happens that the eggs are found when reaping the corn in harvest, and I scarcely think they are all addled ones. In this instance had the young hatched out safely they would have been in a very helpless condition by the 1st of September, the red-letter day of the English sportsman, and seeing that the corn will be all cut, and no doubt the last "harvest home" sung by then, it seems to me difficult to conceive how they (deprived of all shelter) could have escaped destruction and migrated safely from our shores.—*F. Boyes.*

Quails Nesting at Witnesham and Westleton.—A quail's nest containing ten eggs was found by some labourers while cutting grass at Witnesham, Suffolk; and a second nest, a few days previously, containing eggs, at Westleton. The nest of this bird is very unusual in this part of Suffolk.—*E. Charles Moor.*

Little Egret in Devonshire.—I have just had the pleasure of seeing, at the house of Mr. Adkins, bird preserver, South Street, Exeter, a beautiful specimen of the little egret, killed on the 3rd of June last, at Countess Weir, on the River Exe. It is in perfectly adult plumage, and belongs to Mr. E. H. Harbottle, of Topsham, near Exeter. I also saw the note sent with the bird from Mr. Harbottle, requesting it to be preserved.—*J. Gatcombe; Stonehouse, Plymouth, August* 2, 1870.

Little Bittern in Nottinghamshire.—On or about the 24th of May last a little bittern (*Botaurus minutus*) was shot near Worksop, in the above county: it was a male in fine plumage, and was received here for preservation by Mr. Richardson, taxidermist, by whose kindness I was enabled to add the sternum and trachea to my collection.—*F. Boyes.*

Common Tern in Oxfordshire.—On the 7th of August, whilst rowing between Henley and Wargrave, a common tern, evidently a bird of the year, kept flying and hovering over the water, and passed so close to the boat that I nearly succeeded in striking it with the oar as it flew by. The wind was blowing strongly at the time up stream.—*A. H. Smee; August* 14, 1870.

Arrival of Spring Migrants.—Willow wren, first seen, April 7th; wryneck, 8th; redstart, 9th; chiffchaff, 13th; nightingale, 13th; blackcap and swallow, 14th; cuckoo, 18th; lesser whitethroat, 20th; whitethroat, 21st; tree lark, 21st; turtle dove, 21st; sand martin, 22nd; wheatear, 23rd; garden warbler, 30th; butcher bird, May 12th; flycatcher, 15th; swift, 16th; house martin, 17th.—*E. C. Moor.*

Sharks off the Cornish Coast.—When out fishing yesterday, about three miles off Towan Head, we captured a blue shark, which measured four feet in length, being about one year old. On examining it we were much surprised to find three letters, "U N F," branded on its left side, under the back fin. From the inside of which we took a pilchard, measuring nine inches in length. Two other sharks were also captured, one of the common, the other of the blue species, which are considered scarce along this coast: several dog-fish were also seen by us during the day, which I need not add greatly interfered with our fishing arrangements.—*Frederick Newton; Beaucliffe House, Newquay, Cornwall, August* 9, 1870.

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